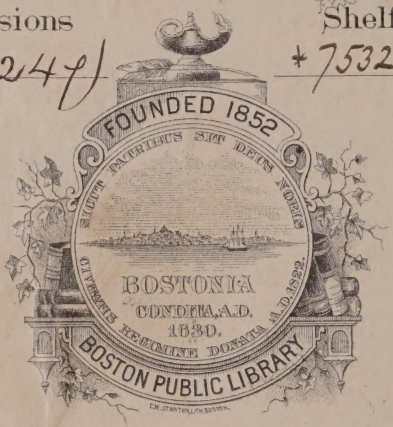
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08630 870 5

1102

Accessions
(21247)

Shelf No.
+7532.64



Received, Oct. 18, 1890.

DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS

ITS HISTORICAL POSSESSIONS AND WANTS.

BEING

A REPORT MADE TO THE CONVENTION OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS, HELD IN TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, MAY 14, 1884.

BY THE REV. EDMUND F. SLAFTER,

REGISTRAR OF THE DIOCESE.

BOSTON:
CUPPLES, UPHAM, AND COMPANY.
Old Corner Bookstore.
1884.

Dupl. No. 5 : 7547.71

(21247)
OCT 18 1890

REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR OF THE DIOCESE.

THE office of Registrar in this Diocese was created by canon in 1858. The Rev. George M. Randall, D.D., held the office from its creation until 1865, when he was consecrated Bishop of Colorado. From that date it was filled by the Rev. William S. Bartlet until his death, which occurred on Dec. 12th, 1883. On the 5th of February, of the present year, the undersigned was appointed to the office by the Standing Committee of the Diocese. The canonical duty of the Registrar is, in general terms, to procure all such journals, files, papers, reports, copies of charters and acts of incorporation of churches, and other documents, as may be of value in the history of this Diocese; and all this material is to be arranged, indexed, and otherwise put in such order that it may be accessible and useful.

As the Diocese had never provided a depository for its historical collections, on the death of the late Registrar, at the request of the Bishop, the Rev. John S. Beers proceeded to collect together the scattered material belonging to the Diocese, which was packed in nine separate boxes, and deposited in five or six different places. The Diocese is under great obligation to the Rev. Mr. Beers for this important service.

The first duty to which the present Registrar directed his attention was the examination and classification of the material now in the archives of the Diocese. On bringing it together, it was found to consist, in general terms, of a small number of manuscripts of the Right Rev. Edward Bass, D.D., the first Bishop of the Diocese; of manuscript records of all the official acts of the

Right Rev. Alexander V. Griswold, D.D., for the thirty-two years of his Episcopate ; two folio volumes in manuscript, containing a record of the proceedings of the Eastern Diocese, complete from its formation, May 29, 1810, to Sept. 28, 1842; a manuscript volume containing an account of the Easter Collections in the Eastern Diocese; four manuscript folios containing the proceedings of the Diocese of Massachusetts, in convention, from 1784 to 1866; one manuscript volume in folio, containing the proceedings of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Massachusetts, from Jan. 5, 1820, to November, 1864; sixty-four packages of manuscript papers of the Standing Committees in this Diocese, being the annual accumulations from 1820 to 1883 inclusive; twelve manuscript historical sketches and records of parishes in this Diocese; fifty manuscript letters and other documents, of which twelve are letters of Bishop Bass, bearing date from 1769, when he was a missionary of the English "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," to 1803, the year of his death,—the remainder being mostly letters addressed to Bishop Bass by clergymen of that period, only six of them bearing date subsequent to his death in 1803.

Of printed matter there was found one complete set of the Journals of the Conventions of the Church in this Diocese from 1784 to 1883; beside this solitary set, there were several hundred Journals of various years, but of fifteen of these publications there were no duplicates; Journals of the Eastern Diocese, from 1831 to 1842 inclusive, and eleven Journals of the General Convention, the series being very incomplete; Journals of forty-two other Dioceses of the Church in the United States, varying from one to thirty each, but a complete set of none of them; a few charges and addresses of Bishop Eastburn and of Bishop Paddock, but a complete set in neither case; incomplete sets of the reports of the Episcopal Clerical Fund Association, the Society for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of Deceased Clergymen, the Boston Episcopal Charitable Society, the Diocesan Parish Aid Society, the Church Reading-Room, the Massachusetts Episcopal Society for the Religious Instruction of the Freedmen, the Dakota League of Massachusetts, the Episcopal Theological School

at Cambridge, the Massachusetts Church Missionary Society, and the Church Home for Orphan and Destitute Children. There were sixty-six historical discourses relating to Parishes in this Diocese, and twenty-six of a similar character relating to the Church outside of this Diocese. With a few other miscellaneous documents, this constitutes the collection which came into the possession of the present Registrar.

Within the last two months, the undersigned has made application for additional historical documents, and has received a small but valuable package of manuscript papers belonging to the late Bishop Parker, presented by Charles H. Parker, Esq., of Boston; an interesting and important collection of manuscript papers of the late Rev. William Clark, a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, at Dedham and Stoughton in colonial times, generously presented by Jeremiah Colburn, Esq., of Boston; sixty Journals of the Convention of this Diocese, presented by Mrs. James B. Dow of Boston, some of them of great value to the Diocese. Beside the above specially solicited, the Registrar has received a discourse and other proceedings on the occasion of the funeral of the late Rev. Theodore Edson, D.D., presented by Dr. John O. Green of Lowell. He has also received the papers of the Standing Committee from May, 1883, to May, 1884, forwarded by the Secretary, the Rev. George S. Converse.

The above is, in general terms, the historical material now belonging to the Diocese. It is obvious to see that this constitutes only the nucleus of a vastly larger, and incomparably richer, collection, which, in the words of the Canon, "may be of value in the history of this Diocese."

As there has been from the beginning no depository provided by the Diocese for these historical accumulations, my predecessors have apparently been receptive, but could not naturally be anxious to swell the volume of material already in their hands. But the time is come when we may properly take a new departure. It is now nearly a hundred years since the first convention of our Church was held in this Diocese, and close upon two hundred years since the first parish of the English Church was organized in the Colony of

Massachusetts Bay. Through all this period our Church has been steadily lengthening her cords, and strengthening her stakes. She has been patiently and clearly moving on towards the maturity of her strength. Her history has never been written, and never can be properly written until the material out of which the narrative is to be woven has been brought together. The Trustees of the Episcopal Theological School have generously placed in the hands of the Registrar the exclusive use of a suitable room in their Library Building, with the reasonable probability that they will be able to spare it for a long period. The time is therefore now ripe, and the way is clear, for the enlargement and enrichment of our historical collection. If the Clergy and intelligent Laymen of the Diocese are careful and vigilant in securing and forwarding to the Registrar such material as may be easily accessible to them, in the progress of a few years our collection will become rich in rare and priceless historical material, and be an honor to this ancient and expanding Diocese. The additions which ought to be made to the invaluable material which we already possess naturally falls into the following classes: —

I. — *Manuscript Correspondence and Documents.*

A very important part of the history of the Church is to be found in the correspondence of the Bishops and more prominent Clergy and Laity. In this correspondence the spirit of the Church in each generation is embalmed. The aims and purposes, the desires and aspirations, of her leading and active members are here more clearly visible than anywhere else. The few letters of the Clergy of the Colonial period now in the possession of the Diocese are not only historically valuable and interesting, but they disclose the zeal, energy, and self-consecration by which the scattered Clergy of that time were actuated and controlled. It is not extravagant to say that there are stored away in attics, and other receptacles of rubbish, large numbers of letters and documents which are not of any interest or value to their present possessors,

but which, nevertheless, have a flavor of antiquity that has thus far restrained them from turning them over to the paper-mill, or committing them to the flames. These miscellaneous and scattered leaves of history are utterly useless where they are; but, when brought together into an orderly and related series of similar documents, they assume a new importance; they shed light where there was darkness before; they become living memorials of their authors, and tell, in a simple and natural way, the story of the Church's progress, its struggles, and its achievements. The proper place, therefore, for the correspondence of the distinguished Clergymen and Laymen of the Diocese, at least of the past generations, is in our collection, now in progress of formation, and which we may reasonably hope will soon be replete and rich in this class of historical papers.

II. — *Printed Historical Matter relating directly to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Massachusetts.*

This class includes all printed discourses by Clergymen of our Church in this Diocese, from the beginning down to the present time. Such sermons or addresses are of necessity directly or indirectly historical, whether they treat of the annals of a Parish, of the life and services of a useful member of the Church, an Ordination, the Consecration of a Church, or of any subject which called for their publication. Along the line of history, from the establishment of the first Parish in the Colony of Massachusetts, in 1686, there have arisen differences of opinion, on which statements and counter-statements have appeared in print, generally on important questions, all of which should be preserved in the archives of the Church. Within this class fall Pastoral Letters, whether by the Bishops, or by the Rectors to their parishioners; the reports of Societies, whether Parochial or Diocesan; sketches or histories of Parishes, in separate volumes or included in the local histories of towns or cities of the Commonwealth; the memoirs of Clergymen in this Diocese, and of Laymen who have borne an important part in the work of the Church.

III. — *The Published Works of Clergymen of this Diocese, to whatever Subjects they relate, and the Works of Distinguished Laymen on Ecclesiastical or Religious Questions.*

The publications of this class are indirectly historical, and show the extent and breadth of the activities of the Clergy, and the interest and influence of learned Laymen on religious subjects. The Christian literature of the Diocese presents an interesting and important element in its history.

IV. — *Historical Works relating to the Protestant Episcopal Church outside of the Diocese of Massachusetts.*

The history of the Church in this Diocese is so interwoven with that of other Dioceses, and of the Church in the United States of which it is a part, that the history of the one cannot be wholly separated from that of the other. They interlock and touch at numberless points. This class includes all general histories of the Church, historical discourses, histories of Parishes, and the Journals both of the Conventions of other Dioceses, and of the General Conventions. Many of these Journals are already in the archives, but it is of the highest importance to complete the sets as far as possible. To the foregoing should be added complete sets of Church Almanacs, which often contain information that can be obtained nowhere else.

V. — *The History of the non-Episcopal Churches and Religious Organizations within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

Our Church having been planted in the midst of a Puritan community, in which opinions prevailed hostile to the English Church, in which there existed strong and even violent prejudices against Episcopacy and other doctrines and usages of our Ecclesiastical system, the history of our Church's growth in strength, numbers, and influence, the overcoming of the hostility and prejudice which continued through so many weary years, but now happily extinct or confined to very narrow limits, cannot be understood without a full and

comprehensive knowledge of these religious organizations. Their histories, as displayed in the works of Gov. Bradford, Gov. Winthrop, Edward Johnson, and Cotton Mather, down to the recent writings of Dr. Joseph B. Felt and Dr. Henry M. Dexter, together with the historical discourses and occasional sermons which have emanated from these bodies, should constitute a part, and not an unimportant part, of our collections.

In these five classes will be found what, in the language of the Canon, "may be of value in the history of this Diocese," and, we may add, what is absolutely necessary and indispensable to a comprehensive and complete knowledge of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Massachusetts.

The historical material included in any of these classes, obtained as gifts to the Diocese through the agency of the Clergy and Laymen of the Church, will henceforth be properly bound, indexed, and catalogued, and thus rendered accessible and useful.

EDMUND F. SLAFTER, *Registrar.*

NOTE. — Persons having manuscript or printed documents falling within any of the five classes mentioned in the foregoing report, and which they desire to have permanently preserved among the historical collections of the Diocese, are requested to send them by express or otherwise, directed to the Rev. Edmund F. Slafter, Registrar, No. 18 Somerset Street, Boston, Mass.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 06918 958 5

Boston Public Library
Central Library, Copley Square

Division of
Reference and Research Services

The Date Due Card in the pocket indicates the date on or before which this book should be returned to the Library.

Please do not remove cards from this pocket.

(Mar., 1890, 20,000)

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

One volume allowed at a time, and obtained only by card; to be kept 14 days (or seven days in the case of fiction and juvenile books published within one year) without fine; not to be renewed; to be reclaimed by messenger after 21 days, who will collect 20 cents besides fine of 2 cents a day, including Sundays and holidays; not to be lent out of the borrower's household, and not to be transferred; to be returned at this Hall.

Borrowers finding this book mutilated or unwarrantably defaced, are expected to report it; and also any undue delay in the delivery of books.

***No claim can be established because of the failure of any notice, to or from the Library, through the mail.

The record below must not be made or altered by borrower.